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WATKINS, J. E.—Report on the Section of Transportation and Engineering in the United States National Museum, 1888. Ext. Rept. Nat. Mus., 1887-'88. From the Smithsonian Institution.

WHEELER, H. J.—Soils and Fertilizers. Bull. No. 8, Agri. Exp. Stat., Rh. Is. State Agri. School, Sept., 1890.

WILSON, T.—A Study of Prehistoric Anthropology. Ext. Rept. Nat. Mus., 1887-'88, pp. 597-671.

—Results of an Inquiry as to the Existence of Man in North America during the Paleolithic Period of the Stone Age. Ext. Rept. Nat. Mus., 1887-'88. From the Smithsonian Institution.

WOODWARD, A. S., and C. D. SHERBORN.—A Catalogue of British Fossil Vertebrata. From the authors..

RECENT LITERATURE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN NATURALIST:

DEAR SIR: I have just seen the review of the "Guide for Science-Teaching," No. VIII., on "Insecta," in the January number of the AMERICAN NATURALIST. One sentence of that review cannot be passed unnoticed by those who are laboring for the cause of science-teaching. When Mr. Kingsley says: "We cannot help wishing that we had some really first-class text-book of entomology which would attack the subject from every side," I must reply, emphatically, that this was the very thing we did not aim to write, and which we did not think was needed.

As is well known, the "Science-Guides" are written for the great body of teachers of our public and private schools,—that is, for teachers of the young from five to eighteen years of age. Do these teachers need a text-book which shall attack the subject from every side, or a guide *to show them how to make their pupils attack the subject from a few sides*? Will boys and girls trained from early childhood to do this by direct observation and comparison of specimens in hand *need a text-book* when they enter college? I think not. Nowhere along the way is a text-book needed, even if it be "first-class," and nowhere should it be placed between nature and the child. It may be that the special student in college or the professor would find a *reference book*, presenting the subject from every point of view, very convenient, but it is not for specialists that those most deeply interested in the cause of science-teaching are working. These recognize the fact that while the science primer, conceived in the scientific spirit, but treating the subject from a few sides, may shoot far below the minds of specialists, a reference book, treating the subject from every side, would fall as a heavy weight upon the teachers of the young, *because it would not meet their imperative needs*.

The time has come when we must explain the ways and means whereby teachers shall be able to make their large classes of children do independent observational and mental work,—in a word, scientific work,—and when this difficult task is accomplished we may rest assured that the power thus gained by the young will enable them to seek and find for themselves those original sources of knowledge on any given subject which are contained in many libraries. We may go even a step farther and make the logical prediction that this same power will enable some of them, perhaps, to add to the stock of absolute knowledge.

I desire to thank Mr. Kingsley for the expression of his views on other subjects concerning which naturalists are by no means agreed, and I write this reply only because the part of his review to which I have taken exception touches upon what Professor Hyatt and I consider a vital principle of science-teaching.

Respectfully yours, J. M. A.

General Notes.

GEOLOGY AND PALEONTOLOGY.

On a Collection of Fossil Birds from the Equus Beds of Oregon.¹—Silver Lake is one of the alkaline lakes of Oregon, and lies somewhat to the southward of the middle part of the state, or, approximately speaking, in $43^{\circ} .05' \text{ N. lat.}$, and $43^{\circ} 25' \text{ W. long.}$ In a direct line it is a little more than sixty miles from Fort Klamath. It is a small lake, not over twelve miles long by some eight or nine wide. Fresh water passes into it from Silver Creek over a swampy delta near its northwestern extremity, and a smaller stream of pure water enters it from the westward. The topography of the country about it, as well as the geology of the vicinity, is interesting, and the fauna will well repay the further investigation of the naturalist. So far as at present known, there is but one species of fish that occurs in this lake, *Myloleucus formosus* of Girard, one of the Cyprinidæ. Numerous species of aquatic birds are found in numbers on the lake, and frequent its limiting shores and marshes. Chief among these are the swans and geese, the pelicans and the cormorants. *Aechmophorus occidentalis*, the western grebe, represents one of the constantly present podicipidine forms found upon this sheet of water; and there they may be

¹ Read before the Biological Society of Washington, March 21st, 1891.